

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4283
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USELM LIVE OAK
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 21566

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GE, GW
SUBJECT: TRANSIT TRAFFIC AND THE LOEWE EXPULSION

1. IN DECEMBER 23 BONN GROUP MEETING, FRG REP (HENZE)
INFORMED ALLIES THAT GDR BORDER AUTHORITIES IMPEDED
BERLIN-HAMBURG TRANSIT TRAFFIC ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER
22-23, APPARENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE EXPULSION
FROM EAST BERLIN OF ARD TV CORRESPONDENT LOTHAR LOEWE.

2. SPEAKING ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION FROM THE FRG
INTERIOR MINISTRY, HENZE SAID THE GDR HAD IMPEDED
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BERLIN-HAMBURG TRANSIT TRAFFIC BETWEEN 23:00 DECEMBER
22 AND 03:00 DECEMBER 23. AT BOTH ENDS OF THE ROUTE,
TRANSIT TRAVELLERS WERE CONTROLLED NORMALLY. HOWEVER,
EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE NORMAL INSPECTION AND
CLEARANCE, THEY WERE LEFT WAITING AT THE GDR BORDER
CROSSINGS. NO TRAVELLERS WERE TURNED BACK. HOWEVER,

THE DELAYS AT STAAKEN LASTED FROM FIFTEEN TO THIRTY MINUTES AND AT HORST UP TO FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

3. IN NUMEROUS CASES, TRAVELLERS ASKED GDR BORDER AUTHORITIES ABOUT THE REASON FOR THE APPARENTLY POINT-LESS DELAY. GDR OFFICIALS REPLIED CONVERSATIONALLY THAT IT WAS DUE TO THE LOTHAR LOEWE EXPULSION FROM THE GDR, REPORTED SEPTEL. HENZE QUOTED SEVERAL SUCH STATEMENTS INCLUDING "YOU CAN THANK LOEWE," AND "ITS ALL LOEWE'S FAULT."

4. HENZE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD PREPARED A PAPER FOR FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER ON THE BASIS OF THE PARTIAL INFORMATION HE HAD AT HAND. HE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THE MATTER BE TAKEN UP IN THE TRANSIT COMMISSION. HOWEVER, HE EMPHASIZED THAT NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN MADE AS TO HOW THE FRG SHOULD REACT TO THE GDR ACTION. HENZE SAID IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE. HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT EXCLUDE THAT THE ALLIES WOULD HAVE TO RAISE THE INCIDENT WITH THE SOVIETS.

5. COMMENT: THE GDR INTENTION IN THE LOEWE AFFAIR IS FAR FROM CLEAR. HENZE ALSO INFORMED US THAT LOEWE'S PERMIT TO STAY IN THE GDR EXPIRED IN ANY CASE IN ONE WEEK. UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE GDR DECISION TO EXPEL LOEWE DRAMATICALLY CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS AN ATTEMPT TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE FRG. IN ADDITION, THE GDR HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO REINFORCE THAT MESSAGE WITH A DELICATELY CALCULATED BIT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESSURE APPLIED TO THE EVER SENSITIVE NERVE OF BERLIN TRANSIT. END COMMENT.
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